

October 3, 2017

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Regular Meeting

Chairman Breneman called to order a Regular Meeting of the Erie County Council at 7:00 p.m. at the Erie County Council Chambers, 140 West 6th Street, Room 117, Erie, PA. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mrs. Loll read the following prayer/invocation:

“Dear Lord, you have called us to one table, guide us not to pursue our own course. We have been elected to work together for the good of all the people not just a few. Remind us of the abundance that we have to share and not let our greed or envy to let any go without. We have been promised the waters of peace and justice do not let our violence and discord with each other grow. Return us to our duties for one and all. Send us from this table as an assembly to lead in fairness and impartiality. We ask this in the name of our Lord. Amen.”.

Roll Call

The County Clerk called the roll:

Members Present: Mr. DiMattio
Mrs. Fatica
Dr. Foust
Mr. Horton
Mr. Leone (Via Telephone)
Mrs. Loll
Mr. Breneman

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith, County Clerk
Sue Ellen Pasquale, Manager of Accounting
James Sparber, Director of Finance
Gary Lee, Director of Administration

Presentation of Citation Mrs. Fatica presented Erie County Sheriff John Loomis and City of Erie Police Chief Donald Dacus with a citation for their work with the Erie Police Athletic League (PAL). Mrs. Fatica stated that this organization means a lot to her both with her work with the Erie School District and being able to see the students interact with PAL, and as her “babies” from the Nurse/Family Partnership were growing up, she saw them involved now that they are older. She stated it is an honor to be able to present the citation. Mrs. Fatica mentioned that Erie PAL is the one and only chapter that has a Sheriff and a Chief of Police working together. Sheriff Loomis thanked Council and Mrs. Fatica for the honor. He stated the first year of PAL went beyond their expectations and he stated it couldn’t be done without the officers and deputies in the audience. Chief Dacus also thanked Council and stated that it reinforces their motivation to keep doing what they are doing. He also stated that the officers and deputies in the audience are the key, they are the ones building the relationships and they have already seen over 60 kids that they have reached out to and made a difference in their lives. He stated that it is heartfelt to watch them bring the human side of police work to these kids. They then introduced the officers and deputies: Erie Police Department – Mike Cacchione, Chris O’Connell, Curtis Waite, Thomas Lenox, and Jason Weismiller; Sheriff’s Department – Lt. Marty Davis and School Resource Officer David Knight.

Chairman Breneman then thanked members in the audience from Penn State-Behrend and advised if they had any questions about the process or the meeting, Council members would be available after the meeting to answer any questions.

Hearing of The Public

Mike Renzel, East Springfield; Mr. Renzel stated that he had two friends who got involved in a small amount of drug usage and one of his friends was shot by his wife. He stated people sold him illegal drugs, bad things happened. He stated his other friend owed someone \$100 for some marijuana and he got shot and died. Mr. Renzel stated that he went to high school with some of these people and they have asked to rent property from him. He sees them at the grocery store and he does not want to associate with these people in any way. He stated they may have minor criminal records but are still doing the same things and are known by law enforcement. He stated he never wants to see these people again. He stated he thinks it is great to give someone a second chance and he rents to two convicted felons but they work. He said the other individuals might work but they still sell drugs and everyone who knows them from high school knows what they do. He stated his friend had a drug problem when he was young, moved to Erie, then moved back to East Springfield and got involved with the high school friends and his wife ended up shooting him. He blames this on drugs and alcohol. He has two rental properties on 16th Street in Erie and he stated there is a drug house on Poplar and he watches people go in and out of there all day long. He stated he would never rent to anyone who goes in or out of that house and he should never be forced to rent to them.

Chairman Breneman noted that Mr. Renzel was speaking about the HRC Ordinance that Council is still deliberating on and he asked that Mr. Renzel leave his contact information with the office.

Janet Anderson, Fairview Township; Ms. Anderson read the following statement: “Good evening esteemed members of County Council and members of the public at large. I would like to speak on behalf of Up for the Job Initiative as a member of the coalition. I have personally received calls from out of state manufacturers asking for the list of GE impacted workers so that they may recruit them to their facilities inside and outside of Pennsylvania. Like our manufacturers, others suffer from the retiring workforce and lack of pipeline to fill those vacant positions. After a number of us on the coalition received these calls, the UE 506 worked with the County to develop a collaborative effort to brainstorm and strategize ways to keep dislocated workers here in Erie. The Up for the Job Initiative was the result of that collaboration. Northwest Pennsylvania Job Connect, formerly the Northwest Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (WIB) is a public workforce system engaged with helping dislocated workers and others with barriers to gain employment access benefits and ultimately find jobs. The role that Northwest Pennsylvania Job Connect has played in the coalition is to provide aggregate information about the current status and progress of those GE workers. The changing identified needs and expectation of these workers, and the efforts of the Workforce staff on behalf of these dislocated workers. The data that I shared with you shows that Erie County has an ample supply of skilled workers to meet the demands of manufacturers here in Erie. Unfortunately, they also meet the demands of manufacturers outside of Erie and Pennsylvania. Time is of the essence. Impacted workers have taken advantage of the relocation benefits afforded to them by the Trade Act and have moved to other locations in Pennsylvania and beyond. Erie County Council has a real opportunity to partner with economic development, UE 506, Northwest Pennsylvania Job Connect, the Chamber, and others to launch a proactive approach to business attraction with a resource few communities have – a ready and skilled workforce, a workforce that wants to stay right here in Erie County. You must act now if we are going to keep them. Thank you for your time.”.

Scott Slawson, Millcreek Township; Mr. Slawson spoke regarding the Up for the Job Initiative. He read the following statement: “As many of you know, we have been in the decision bargaining with GE again over the last 60 days. One of the things I would like to bring up is the initiative that was brought up by us and the reason we brought that initiative on is because we’ve seen jobs, good family sustaining employment, migrate away from this area. We’ve seen the closure of Hammermill, Steris, Zurns, and GE move on and what we truly are looking for is to replace those jobs with good family sustaining jobs for our community. Jobs that actually assist what the Sheriff and the Police Department are doing – a future for our people. We are watching the population dwindle, watching workers leave, and this is something that we’re not willing to give up on. We are not willing to give up on Erie. Many of us actually left the area and came back for a reason, because we love the Erie area. There is no reason that we can’t attract viable manufacturing to this area. We have a very low cost of living, we have a beautiful area with a nice body of fresh water, we have a port, we have rail access, we have the airport and interstates. I know some questions

came up with the RFP and how that came about and the selection process of how we got to the LLC that was chosen. I can tell you that we were in on that process and the Chamber was in on the process as was the County. Three organizations came in and gave a bid for their work. At the end of the day, separately, we all chose who we thought would be best suited to represent what it is we are trying to do. There was another meeting after that where they talked about modifying the RFP. I am here to urge you to please consider the \$36,000 that we discussed last week. The other part is that this is not a one and done and this is not a six month process where we say we're reaching out to Siemens and all these big companies to attract them to Erie. This is going to be a long term, sustained initiative, and I can tell you we are in it for the long haul and we are asking you to do the same. We would appreciate your assistance.”.

Ron Oliver; Erie County; Mr. Oliver is a steel worker with Local 3199. There were over 1,800 members in early 2000. It is down to about 700 members. So many jobs have been lost in Erie County and Mr. Oliver stated that they really need this initiative to move forward for jobs. There are so many qualified workers that are laid off and Mr. Oliver stated that Council are leaders and he hopes in return that jobs are created. Mr. Oliver feels this initiative is a no brainer and it needs to happen. Too many people have lost their jobs and it's difficult out there. He asked Council to vote the right way.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Horton moved to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2017 regular meeting. This was seconded by Mrs. Fatica and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Reports of County Officials

Gary Lee, Director of Administration, spoke regarding the Up for the Job Initiative. Mr. Lee stated he realizes there may have been some confusion surrounding the Up for the Job proposal. He wanted to address that this evening. The Up for the Job initiative arose from community organizations, including the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, UE Local 506 leadership, the United Way of Erie County, the Workforce Development Board, Labor and Industry's Rapid Response, the Governor's Action Team, and ECGRA. Members on the committee heard three presentations who responded to the RFP. Each member scored the proposals separately. The eight committee members' scores were combined, and 1053 Newton Limited Liability received the highest score. Mr. Lee stated the following meeting between committee members and that consultant, the conversation turned to the potential for this project. The enthusiasm in the room grew and the committee was eager to launch this much needed initiative. He felt that the great enthusiasm in the room led to the confusion about the budget for the project. He regrets the confusion surrounding this issue and it was never his intention to provide misleading information or confusing information to Council. The good part about this is that it has been corrected. The current request before Council for \$36,000 for six months stays within the integrity of the Procurement Code. Additional funding opportunities for the initiative will be sought from other community partners. Mr. Lee stated that the value of the process of working with County Council worked well. The confusion was identified and allowed to be rectified. He thanked Council for seeing the potential for the Up for Job initiative, which he felt is important at this time to grow the economy and give these workers the opportunity to stay in Erie, raise families in Erie, and provide for their families.

Mr. Horton stated that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, September 28, 2017, and agreed to place Ordinance 90, 2017, Resolution 37, 2017 and two Sales of Parcels, to the agenda.

Mr. Horton then thanked his colleagues for the citations awarded to the Police Athletic League. He serves on the Board of Directors and this program has already had an impact in the communities that don't have the resources that other communities have. Mr. Horton stated he is very proud of Sheriff Loomis and the Sheriff's Department for the work that they are doing.

There was no Personnel Committee meeting.

Chairman Breneman made the following statement: “I think we are all trying to find some kind of solace or meaning of the events that have hit our country, first with the hurricanes in the south and Puerto Rico. For a natural disaster, there is something to blame, the weather, the forecasters, the municipal leaders whether they paved too much and not create enough overflow or ways for the water to leave the area, did they not enforce code standards for houses to withstand those types of weather events. In those crises, we tend to know how to respond. People go and help dig people out, clean up the homes, help find people temporary shelter, food, and resources they need to have some normalcy until things get back to order. But in times of extreme violence against people, I don’t think there is any response that rises to the level of extremes that we saw. Personally, hearing the gun shots in the videos and watching people scatter, I can’t imagine anything like it. Having that in a war zone is one thing, but having that happen on our own soil, for people who are living their everyday lives trying to have fun, trying to appreciate a simple concert, and to have that wrecked by such evil is horrific and the only response we can give is ensuring that people have access to their loved ones for those who have family and friends in that area, donating blood, giving people your prayers whatever you might believe in. This has an effect. You can’t always go to a disaster zone and do something, you can’t always go to an area devastated by a hurricane and help out, you can’t always go down and render first aid at an event where people get shot, but there are things you can do here. You can help out in your neighborhood, you can always help out in your community, you can always donate your resources and your time, whatever it might be. We don’t have to wait for a disaster to do something, but I think the greatest weapon against evil and this type of horror is to always think about your neighbors, whether you know them or not, and always look for ways to help each other out. I think that is the true test of our country.

With that, I would like to give a moment of silence for those who lost their lives from the hurricanes and the horrific shooting.”.

OLD BUSINESS

Ord. 90, 2017 – GF SA of \$102,000 & Creation of “Up for The Job” Initiative

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 90, 2017, “Thirty-Fourth 2017 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$102,000 and Creation of ‘Up for the Job’ Initiative”. This was moved by Mr. Horton and seconded by Dr. Foust.

Mr. Horton moved to amend the face sheet of the ordinance, the exhibit, and the certificate, to reflect a new amount of \$36,000. Dr. Foust seconded this motion.

Dr. Foust commented that he shared all of Council’s concern and anyone in the community’s concern that the process of this was not as perfect as they would have liked, but the amendment to this ordinance puts it back in alignment with the original RFP. He felt that this is an initiative with goals that are laudable that Council needs to move forward. He commented that this is a tough time for workers and this gives a chance to start something and hopefully there will be other funding partners and go forward in the future with more.

Mr. DiMattio stated that he has wrestled with this for more than five days. At the last meeting, he asked Mr. Lee if there was going to be a plan for this initiative. He stated at that time, as recorded in the minutes, that “no, we would not receive an Up for the Job plan” from the Administration or the County Council. At the Finance Meeting, Mr. Slawson and Mr. Ferritto were both there and spoke. Mr. DiMattio understands where they are coming from and he agrees with both 100%. He has family members that are going to lose their jobs at GE. He has family members who lost their job at Kaiser Aluminum, as well as Steris and International Paper. He commented that this is not a new problem and it has gone on for 30 plus years. When Mr. Rouch presented to Council and Mr. DiMattio asked him what the plan was going to be, Mr. Rouch stated they don’t have one. Mr. DiMattio stated Mr. Slawson is right, this isn’t a one-time fix – this is going to go on. He wished that Ms. Anderson was still in the audience as he had not seen the information that Ms. Anderson presented and he was not aware of those facts. He would hope that whatever becomes of the study and the \$36,000 with things moving forward, and what she has in place, will help rectify the

problem. He wished someone could tell him how this all plays out – where it begins and where it is going to go. People have talked for numerous years about needing to be doing things for economic development in Erie County. There has been failed proposal after failed proposal and there are at least 17 or 18 groups in Erie County who state they do economic development. They tend to trip over each other and step on each other’s toes. He wants to see a plan. He wants to see it work but he wants to see a plan before he can personally appropriate the money. Mr. DiMattio wants this to work 100% and he can’t stress that enough, but at the end of the day, he has constituents calling and saying that the County keeps giving money to other things and it hasn’t worked out and they want to know when the County is going to learn. He commented that if there is something concrete, he would be behind it 100% and will be their biggest advocate. If he had that and could answer those questions, he would vote yes. Until that time, he can’t. He apologized but he was just being honest.

The amendment then carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Ordinance 90, 2017, as amended, then carried in a 6-1 vote, with Mr. DiMattio voting no.

NEW BUSINESS

**Res. 37, 2017 – Exon.
All Outst. Taxes,
Penalties, etc. on
7 Properties Owned
By ERA**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 37, 2017, “Exonerating All Outstanding Taxes, Penalties, Interest and Fees on Seven Properties owned by the Erie Redevelopment Authority”. This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Horton, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

SALE OF PARCELS

Dr. Foust moved to approve the Sale of Parcels from Repository for Unsold Properties at the following index numbers:

- #27-053-213.1-001.83
- #33-102-470.0-013.06

This was seconded by Mrs. Fatica and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Chairman Breneman commented that we are in the midst of a significant election, not just with municipal elections, but also with the County Executive race. He wanted it to be known that although Council, because we deliberate items presented by the Administration, under no circumstance will he accept the business of Council to be swayed for the benefit of effecting the County Executive race. He fully expects Council to deliberate discussions as is normally done and to do so with that same integrity. Chairman Breneman stated that for anyone who is looking to utilize the business done here for anything beyond that, you can look elsewhere.

The next regular County Council meeting will be held at the Erie County Courthouse on Tuesday, October 17, 2017.

There being no further business, the meeting then adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Deneé M. Breter, Council Secretary
